

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DHA-02 IO-11 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OMB-01 AID-05 CU-02 /077 W

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P R 120940Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2456

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 KUALA LUMPUR 0797

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SHUM PINT PINS MY

SUBJ: INTERNAL POLITICAL NOTES

REF: KUALA LUMPUR 8559 (DTG 10040Z JAN 76)

KUALA LUMPUR 0346 (DTG 0200837Z JAN 76)

1. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS: HUMAN RIGHTS -- PROMINANT SARAWAK OPPOSITION PARTY FIGURE RELEASED; LATEST ROUND IN HARUN CASE; NEW CHIEF POLICE OFFICER (CPO) IN PERAK; MIT REOPENS; AND BY-ELECTION FOR LATE PRIME MINISTER'S PARLIAMENTARY SEAT. END SUMMARY OF CONTENTS.

2. HUMAN RIGHTS: PROMINANT SARAWAK OPPOSITION PARTY FIGURE RELEASED. FEB 3 PRESS REPORTED RELEASE WITHOUT FANFARE ON CHINESE NEW YEAR'S EVE (JAN 30) OF DATUK JAMES WONG KIM MIN, 52, DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF SARAWAK
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NATIONAL PARTY (SNAP), FOLLOWING 15 MONTHS

CONFINEMENT AT TAIPING DETENTION CAMP. FOUR OTHERS FROM HIS AREA OF LIMBANG, NEAR THE BRUNEI BORDER, WERE RELEASED WITH HIM, AND TWO OTHERS WERE RELEASED FEB 4. ALL FIRST WERE ARRESTED IN OCTOBER, 1974, UNDER PRESERVATION OF PUBLIC SECURITY REGULATIONS (PPSR) WERE RELEASED FEW MONTHS LATER BY COURT ORDER BUT IMMEDIATELY RE-ARRESTED UNDER THE INTERNAL SECURITY ACT (ISA). GOVERNMENT STATEMENT AT TIME OF JAMES WONG'S ARREST SAID HIS DETENTION WAS FOR "ACTS PREJUDICIAL TO THE SECURITY OF THE STATE," AND NOTED THAT EARLIER ARRESTS OF OTHER MALAYSIANS HAD REVEALED HIS ALLEGED COMPLICITY WITH "FOREIGN POWERS" (I.E., BRUNEI) AGAINST MALAYSIAN INTERESTS. (BRUNEI HAS CLAIMED THE LIMBANG REGION.)

3. JAMES WONG ARREST WAS SOMETHING OF A CAUSE CELEBRE LOCALLY AND A BLEMISH ON MALAYSIA'S HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD (E.G., SEE KL A-42 OF 4/10/75). WONG, IN ADDITION TO BEING A STATE ASSEMBLYMAN, IS A WEALTHY BUSINESSMAN WITH BUSINESS TIES WITH BRUNEI (AS REPORTEDLY IS TRUE OF MANY SARAWAK BUSINESSMEN) AND FAILURE OF GOM TO BRING FORMAL CHARGES AGAINST HIM LED FOREIGN OBSERVERS TO ASSUME HIS ARREST WAS RESULT OF PERSONAL VENDETTA AGAINST HIM BY SARAWAK CHIEF MINISTER RAHMAN YAKUB. RELEASE OF WONG CLEARLY IS A POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT, PERHAPS REFLECTING "FRESH WIND" FROM DIRECTION OF NEW PM DATUK HUSSEIN ONN. SOME OBSERVERS ARE INCLINED HOWEVER TO VIEW THIS AS A MAJOR CONDITION IMPOSED BY SNAP PREPARATORY TO JOINING THE NATIONAL FRONT COALITION, AND NEGOTIATIONS ALONG THESE LINES REPORTEDLY NOW ARE UNDERWAY. RELATED TO THIS IT IS WIDELY RUMORED THAT

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INFORMATION MINISTER DATUK TAIB MOHAMAD, A SARAWAK POLITICIAN REPORTEDLY INVOLVED IN TALKS WITH SNAP, MAY REPLACE RAHMAN YAKUB AS CHIEF MINISTER.

4. LATEST ROUND IN HARUN CASE. SELANGOR CHIEF MINISTER/UMNO YOUTH LEADER DATUK HARUN BIN IDRIS APPEARED BEFORE HIGH COURT FEB 9,

AT WHICH TIME CHARGES OF CORRUPTION AGAINST HIM WERE AMENDED FOR SECOND TIME. AS BEST WE CAN FATHOM, AMENDMENTS BY PROSECUTION SEEK TO FURTHER IMPLICATE HARUN IN WRONG-DOING BY SUGGESTING THAT HE ACTIVELY SOLICITED ILLEGAL GRATUITIES FOR THE UNITED MALAY'S NATIONAL ORGANIZATION (UMNO) OR FOR PERFORMING OFFICIAL ACTS. ONCE AGAIN HARUN PLEADED NOT GUILTY TO ALL CHARGES. JUDGE SET APRIL 21 AS NEXT DATE FOR HEARING CASE. MEANWHILE, HARUN CONTINUES TO MAINTAIN A VERY ACTIVE PRESENCE, ADDRESSING VARIETY OF FORUMS, CHIDING URBAN MALAYS FOR POLITICAL LETHARGY AND PROCLAIMING TO ALL WITHIN HEARING DISTANCE THAT HE IS 100 PERCENT BEHIND NEW PRIME MINISTER HUSSEIN ONN.

5. NEW CHIEF POLICE OFFICER (CPO) IN PERAK. ACTING SENIOR ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER YUEN YUET LENG, MOST RECENTLY DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF POLICE SPECIAL BRANCH, ASSUMED DUTIES AS CPO, PERAK, ON FEB 6. YUEN WHO IS REGARDED AS PERHAPS MOST EFFECTIVE ETHNIC CHINESE OFFICER IN POLICE FORCE, WILL HAVE HIS WORK CUT OUT FOR HIM. HE REPLACES LATE CPO TAN SRI KHOO CHONG KONG, WHO ALONG WITH HIS DRIVER WAS ASSASSINATED IN A COMMUNIST TERRORIST (CT) AMBUSH IN IPOH LAST NOVEMBER (THE KILLING HAS BEEN PUBLICLY ATTRIBUTED TO THE MARXIST-LENINIST FACTION OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF MALAYA). YUEN, 47, CHARACTERIZED THE SITUATION IN CONFIDENTIAL

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PERAK, A LONG-TIME CT HOT BED, AS "SERIOUS" BUT SOLVABLE, ALTHOUGH HE NOTED THAT MANPOWER SHORTAGES LIMITED PRESENT POLICE CAPABILITIES.

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P R 120940Z FEB 76

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2457

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 KUALA LUMPUR 0797

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

6. MIT REOPENS. JUNIOR COLLEGE EQUIVALENT
MARA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY (MIT), CLOSED
LAST MONTH DUE TO STUDENT PROTEST AGAINST
STRICT NEW DISCIPLINARY CODES (KL 0210 --
DTG 13060Z JAN 76), NOW REOPENING BY STAGES WITH
BOTH CAMPUSES TO RESUME FULL OPERATIONS BY
MARCH 12, ACCORDING TO SCHOOL OFFICIALS.
STUDENTS ARE BEING READMITTED ON COURSE-BY-
COURSE BASIS, ALLOWING AUTHORITIES TO REFUSE
APPLICATIONS BY THOSE CONSIDERED "UNDESIRABLE."
SCREENING PROCESS IS BEING CHALLENGED HOWEVER
BY TWO STUDENT LEADERS WHO HAVE FILED PAPERS
SEEKING HIGH COURSE INJUNCTION ON GROUNDS
PROCEDURE IS AIMED AT DENYING ADMISSION TO A
SIZEABLE NUMBER OF STUDENTS AND SUCH DENIAL
WOULD "JEOPARDIZE THEIR LEGAL RIGHTS AND
LEGITIMATE EXPECTATIONS" (AS ONE PRESS
REPORT PUT IT). ON FEB 11 JOINT COMMITTEE
OF REPRESENTATIVES OF VARIOUS STUDENTS'
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AND YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS HELD PRESS
CONFERENCE IN KL TO PROTEST ALLEGED
EXPULSION OF 45 STUDENTS FEB 9 FOR
SUPPOSED ROLE IN JANUARY DISTURBANCES.
STUDENT/YOUTH REPRESENTATIVES CRITICIZED
LACK OF DUE PROCESS IN MATTER, CLAIMING

AUTHORITIES SHOULD AWAIT FINDINGS OF COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY SET UP BY EDUCATION MINISTRY. (COMMENT: FROM WHAT WE HEAR, MIT IS BUREAUCRATIC AND ACADEMIC NIGHTMARE, OVERCROWDED, UNAUDITED AND OVERLY POLITICIZED. EDUCATION MINISTER MAHATHIR MOHAMAD IN OFF-RECORD BRIEFING FEB 11 TO GROUP OF LOCAL NEWSMEN -- PROTECT -- EXPRESSED DISMAY OVER STATE OF AFFAIRS AT MIT. HE INDICATED IT HAD STRAYED FAR FROM ORIGINAL PRECEPTS AS INSTITUTION TO IMPART BUSINESS AND EXECUTIVE SKILLS TO "BUMIPUTRAS" (ETHNIC MALAYS), INSTEAD ADDING ON HODGE PODGE OF ILL-CONSIDERED COURSES AND CONFUSING QUANTITY OF INTAKE (POLITICALLY POPULAR) WITH SUCCESS. MAHATHIR, ALTHOUGH INTENDING TO MAKE ACADEMIC AND ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS TO STRENGTHEN MIT, SEEMS DISINCLINED MAKE ANY CONCESSIONS TO STUDENT ACTIVISTS, WHO HE VIEWS AS CORRUPTED BY VISIONS OF "STUDENT POWER." IN SUM, MIT PROBLEM APPEARS FAR FROM RESOLVED.)

7. BY-ELECTION FOR LATE PRIME MINISTER'S PARLIAMENTARY SEAT.

ELECTION COMMISSION ANNOUNCED FEB 11 THAT FEB 21 HAS BEEN SET AS NOMINATION DATE FOR CANDIDATES FOR PARLIAMENTARY SEAT IN PEKAN, PAHANG STATE, VACATED BY DEATH OF LATE PM TUN ABDUL RAZAK. POLLING WILL TAKE PLACE MARCH 6 IF MORE THAN ONE CANDIDATE FILES NOMINATION PAPERS. AGRICULTURE MINISTER/UMNO VICE PRESIDENT GHAFAR BABA IN CAPACITY OF NATIONAL CONFIDENTIAL

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FRONT SECRETARY GENERAL SAID NF CANDIDATE HAD NOT BEEN CHOSEN AND THAT DECISION WOULD BE MADE BY NF CHAIRMAN DATUK HUSSEIN ONN "AFTER CONSULTING UMNO PAHANG." RAZAK'S ELDEST SON, DATO MOHAMAD NAJIB HAS BEEN PROPOSED AS A CANDIDATE (AS MORE OR LESS A LIVING MEMORIAL TO THE LATE TUN) AND THIS IDEA HAS BEEN ENDORSED BY PAHANG MCA BUT NOT BY LOCAL UMNO BRANCH. UMNO PARTY REGULARS HOWEVER SEEM LUKEWARM TO PROPOSITION, AS NAJIB, CURRENTLY EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF PETRONAS (STATE PETROLEUM CORPORATION)

IS IN HIS EARLY 20'S AND POLITICALLY
UNTESTED.
UNDERHILL

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